

1973

Evolution

Gregory Orr

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GREGORY ORR was born in 1947. He received an M.F.A. from Columbia University in 1972. His first collection of poems, *Burning the Empty Nests*, was published by Harper & Row last spring.

POEM

I will lose you. It is written
into this poem, the way
the fisherman's wife knits
his death into the sweater.

EVOLUTION

After its capture, the animal
was placed in a cage of mirrors.
It sat for hours staring at its own image,
until its fur began to shed.
Soon it learned to live with its left eye closed
so that in spite of the bulb shining overhead,
half of its world was always dark and unknown.
Gradually its left side shriveled up
but its right hand, with which it seized things,
continued to grow.

POEM

Before he passes, the stones shine
in their sheaths of light.
After, they become heavy and gray.

He walks through the fields in his suit
of mirrors. Beneath it,
on a chain around his neck
he wears a small, fur-covered cross.

That is all that he is.
He has left his furniture
in the house of wind.